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self again the servant of God, being of old the Word but now also manifested in the world for our sakes as a man, He may make clear to you through us those things which you seek to get through prayer to Him." Syntax and context suggest interpolation.

Doubtless special studies in doctrinal history will be evoked by this publication. The narrow but fervid interest here shown in the realistic notion of a physical redemption prepares the student for a proper appreciation of Augustine's influence over Western religion.

F. A. CHRISTIE.

Die Christenverfolgungen im römischen Reiche vom Standpunkte des Juristen. Von DR. MAX CONRAT (COHN), Professor des römischen Rechts an der Universität Amsterdam. (Leipzig: J. C. Hinrichs. 1897. Pp. 80.)

UPON such a subject as the persecutions of the early Christians a professor of Roman law should be particularly qualified to speak, and the author of the present work may be assured of a respectful hearing from all students of ancient church history. The advantage that may accrue from approaching the matter from the standpoint of Roman law was shown by the notable article by Professor Mommsen in the *Historische Zeitschrift* for 1890, entitled "Der Religionsfrevel nach römischem Recht." That article completely revolutionized traditional conceptions touching the causes of the persecutions and the methods of procedure against the Christians. Professor Conrat acknowledges his indebtedness to Mommsen's article, upon which his own work is based, but he has evidently done careful and independent work in the sources and he believes that he has reached new and important results. We regret that we are unable to agree with him in that belief. His book has a distinct value because of the numerous quotations from the sources and the elaborate discussions in the notes, but we fail to see that he has contributed anything of importance to our knowledge of the subject. Indeed it seems to us that at some points his treatment marks a distinct step backward.

The author is undoubtedly correct in taking the position that no general law or imperial edict against Christianity is necessary to account for the persecutions and that no such law was passed or edict published during the first two centuries of the Church's life. But when he attempts to find the cause of the persecutions in the actual or alleged violation by the Christians of some other specific law or laws or in their commission of some specific crime he is certainly on the wrong track. He refers in a note to the extraordinary police jurisdiction of the Roman governors—upon which Mommsen rightly lays stress—but he fails to recognize its bearing upon the subject in hand. Thus he says on p. 21 that it is certain "dass die Zugehörigkeit zum Christenthum als solche bez. das Christenthum als solches niemals verboten und darum niemals verfolgt resp. bestraft worden ist." The conclusion of this sentence (the italics are ours) indicates an entire misapprehension of the real situation. As a matter of

fact, though Christianity was not forbidden by the state, Christians were frequently punished, from the time of Nero on, because they were Christians. The possibility of such an apparently anomalous state of affairs lay in the fact that the Roman governors were charged with a large measure of administrative discretion and were empowered to proceed sharply against any who seemed to menace the public safety, even though they might be guilty of no violation of the statutes of the empire. It was apparently during the reign of Nero that the Christians came to be generally regarded as possessing that *odium generis humani* of which Tacitus speaks, and from that time on any governor might arrest and punish them at any time if he found them creating disturbances or believed that they were threatening the public welfare, even though they were guilty of no specific crimes, and this is what many governors did, among them the younger Pliny in Bithynia. Professor Conrat's failure to give due recognition to this aspect of the case has resulted in what seems to us a very serious misinterpretation of Rome's treatment of the early Christians.

A. C. MCGIFFERT.

Petrarch, the First Modern Scholar and Man of Letters. A Selection from his Correspondence, designed to illustrate the Beginnings of the Renaissance. Translated from the original Latin, together with Historical Introductions and Notes. By JAMES HARVEY ROBINSON, Professor of History in Columbia University, with the collaboration of HENRY WINCHESTER ROLFE, sometime Professor of Latin in Swarthmore College. (New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1898. Pp. x, 436.)

THIS book will be gratefully received, not only by the lovers of the Renaissance, but also by that larger public which through all the changes of modern education has, from either loyalty or conviction, retained an affection for the old-fashioned humanistic ideals. The particular problem which the authors set themselves was the presentation of the character of that man, Petrarch, who led the fight for the rehabilitation, among the cramped society of the Middle Ages, of the liberating philosophy of the ancients. The method which they felicitously adopted in place of the usual tedious exposition was, to yield the floor, as it were, to Petrarch himself, by binding together in the frame of an able and lively commentary selected letters of the immense correspondence in which the great scholar has depicted himself, his aspirations, his environment, and his friends. A rapid glance suffices to master the arrangement of the material. An introduction of fifty-seven pages acquaints us with the man and the time; then follow the letters themselves ordered in divisions or rubrics calculated to bring out the significant features of Petrarch's life. These rubrics are as follows: I. Biographical, II. Petrarch and his Literary Contemporaries, III. The Father of Humanism, IV. Travels, V. Political Opinions: Rienzi and Charles IV., VI. The Conflict of Monastic and Secular Ideals, VII. Finale. This general plan will readily